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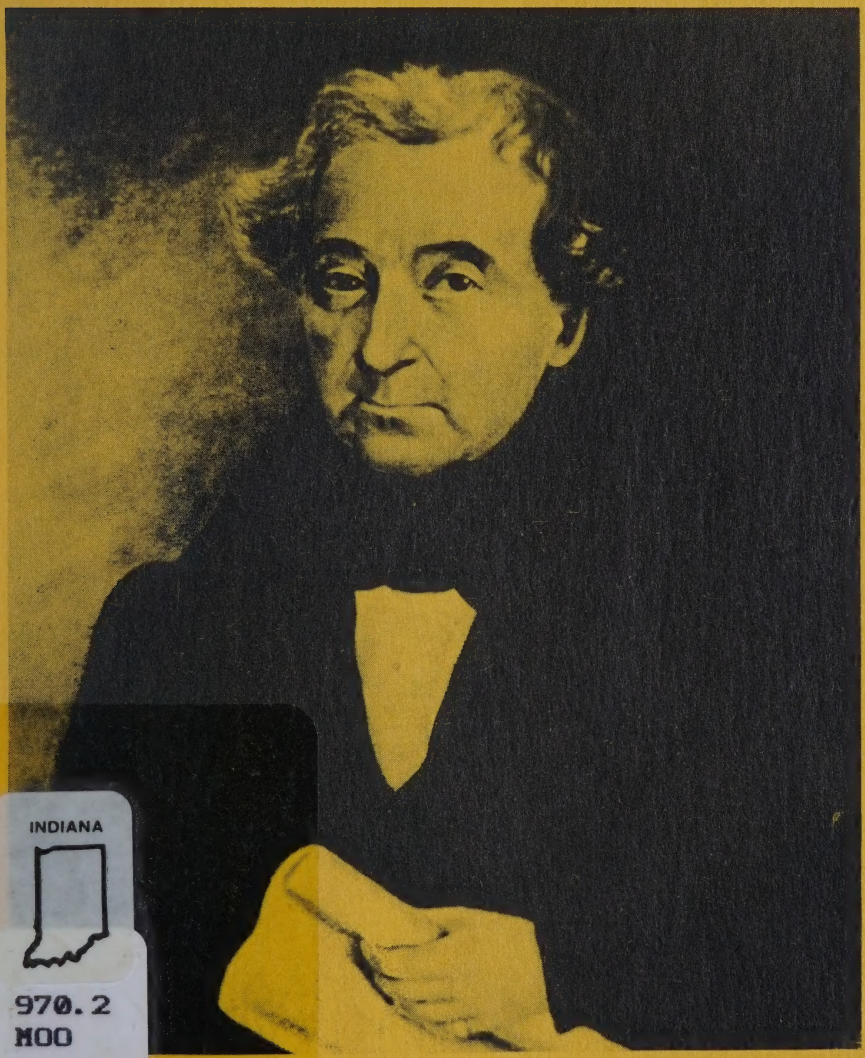
THE MIAMI INDIANS



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Chief Jean Baptiste de Richardville

(Pe - Che - Wa)

1761 ? - August 13, 1841

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MIAMI INDIANS

JAMES MOONEY

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CYRUS THOMAS

(Bureau of American Ethnology)

The Miami Indians occupied the land lying about the confluence of the St. Joseph and the St. Mary's Rivers near the present site of Fort Wayne. Their contact with the early settlers, both pacific and otherwise, was intimate and constant until their final removal shortly after 1840. This pamphlet is a reproduction of the article "Miami" in the Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, edited by Frederick Webb Hodge, Bulletin 30, pp. 852 - 854.

Miami (? Chippewa: Omaumeg, 'people who live on the peninsula'). An Algonquian tribe, usually designated by early English writers as Twightwees (twah twah, the cry of a crane. --Hewitt), from their own name, the earliest recorded notice of which is from information furnished in 1658 by Gabriel Druillettes... who called them the Oumamik, then living 60 leagues from St. Michel, the first village of the Potawatomi mentioned by him; it was therefore at or about the mouth of Green bay, Wis. Tailhan... says that they withdrew into the Mississippi valley, 60 leagues from the bay, and were established there from 1657 to 1676, although Bacqueville de la Potherie asserts that, with the Mascoutens, the Kickapoo, and part of the Illinois, they came to settle at that place about 1667. The first time the French came into actual contact with the Miami was when Perrot visited them about 1668. His second visit was in 1670, when they were living at the headwaters of Fox r., Wis. In 1671 a part at least of the tribe were living with the Mascoutens in a palisaded village in this locality... Soon after this the Miami parted from the Mascoutens and formed new settlements at the s. end of L. Michigan and on Kalamazoo r., Mich. The settlements at the s. end of the lake were at Chicago and on St. Joseph r., where missions were established late in the 17th century, although the former is mentioned as a Wea village at the time of Marquette's visit, and Wea were found there in 1701 by De Courtemarche. It is likely that these Wea were the Miami mentioned by Allouez and others as being united with the Mascou-

tens in Wisconsin. The chief village of the Miami on St. Joseph r. was, according to Zenobius... about 15 leagues inland, in lat. 41°. The extent of territory occupied by this tribe a few years later compels the conclusion that the Miami in Wisconsin, when the whites first heard of them, formed but a part of the tribe, and that other bodies were already in N. E. Illinois and N. Indiana. As the Miami and their allies were found later on the Wabash in Indiana and in N. W. Ohio, in which latter territory they gave their name to three rivers, it would seem that they had moved S. E. from the localities where first known within historic times. Little Turtle, their famous chief, said: "My fathers kindled the first fire at Detroit; thence they extended their lines to the headwaters of the Scioto; thence to its mouth; thence down the Ohio to the mouth of the Wabash, and thence to Chicago over L. Michigan." When Vincennes was sent by Gov. Vaudreville in 1705 on a mission to the Miami they were found occupying principally the territory N. W. of the upper Wabash. There was a Miami village at Detroit in 1703, but their chief settlement was still on St. Joseph r. In 1711 the Miami and the Wea had three villages on the St. Joseph, Maumee, and Wabash. Kekionga, at the head of the Maumee, became the chief seat of the Miami proper, while Ouiatenon, on the Wabash, was the headquarters of the Wea branch. By the encroachments of the Potawatomi, Kickapoo, and other northern tribes the Miami were driven from St. Joseph r. and the country N. W. of the Wabash. They sent out colonies to the E. and formed settlements on Miami r. in Ohio, and perhaps as far E. as the Scioto. This country they held until the peace of 1763, when they retired to Indiana, and the abandoned country was

occupied by the Shawnee. They took a prominent part in all the Indian wars in Ohio valley until the close of the war of 1812. Soon afterward they began to sell their lands, and by 1827 had disposed of most of their holdings in Indiana and had agreed to remove to Kansas, whence they went later to Indian Ter., where the remnant still resides. In all treaty negotiations they were considered as original owners of the Wabash country and all of W. Ohio, while the other tribes in that region were regarded as tenants or intruders on their lands. A considerable part of the tribe, commonly known as Meshingomesia's band, continued to reside on a reservation in Wabash co., Ind., until 1872, when the land was divided among the survivors, then numbering about 300.

The Miami men were described in 1718 as "of medium height, well built, heads rather round than oblong, countenances agreeable rather than sedate or morose, swift on foot, and excessively fond of racing." The women were generally well clad in deerskins, while the men used scarcely any covering and were tattooed all over the body. They were hard-working, and raised a species of maize unlike that of the Indians of Detroit, described as "white, of the same size as the other, the skin much finer, and the meal much whiter." According to the early French explorers the Miami were distinguished for polite manners, mild, affable, and sedate character, and their respect for and perfect obedience to their chiefs, who had greater authority than those of other Algonquian and N. W. tribes. They usually spoke slowly. They were land travelers rather than canoemen. According to Hennepin, when they saw a herd of buffalo they gathered in great numbers

and set fire to the grass about the animals, leaving open a passage where they posted themselves with their bows and arrows; the buffalo, seeking to escape the fire, were compelled to pass the Indians, who killed large numbers of them. The women spun thread of buffalo hair, with which they made bags to carry the meat, toasted or sometimes dried in the sun. Their cabins were covered with rush mats. According to Perrot, the village which he visited was situated on a hill and surrounded by a palisade. On the other hand, Zenobius says that La Salle, who visited the villages on St. Joseph r., taught them how to defend themselves with palisades, and even made them erect a kind of fort with intrenchments. Infidelity of the wife, as among other Indians, was punished by clipping the nose. According to early explorers, they worshiped the sun and thunder, but did not honor a host of minor deities, like the Huron and the Ottawa. Three forms of burial appear to have been practised by the division of the tribe living about Ft. Wayne: (1) The ordinary ground burial in a shallow grave prepared to receive the body in a recumbent position. (2) Surface burial in a hollow log; these have been found in heavy forests; sometimes a tree was split and the halves hollowed out to receive the body, when it was either closed with withes or fastened to the ground with crossed stakes; sometimes a hollow tree was used, the ends being closed. (3) Surface burial wherein the body was covered with a small pen of logs, laid as in a log cabin, the courses meeting at the top in a single log.

The French authors commonly divided the Miami into six bands: Piankashaw, Wea, Atchatchakangouen, Kilatika, Mengakonkia, and Pepicokia.

Of these the first two have come to be recognized as distinct tribes; the other names are no longer known. The Pepicokia, mentioned in 1796 with the Wea and Piankashaw, may have been absorbed by the latter. Several treaties were made with a band known as Eel Rivers, formerly living near Thorntown, Boone co., Ind., but they afterward joined the main body on the Wabash.

According to Morgan... the Miami have 10 gentes: (1) Mowhawa (wolf), (2) Mongwa (loon), (3) Kendawa (eagle), (4) Ahpakosea (buzzard), (5) Kanozawa (Kanwasowau, panther), (6) Pilawa (turkey), (7) Ahseponna (raccoon), (8) Monnato (snow), (9) Kulswa (sun), (10) Water. Chauvignerie, in 1737, said that the Miami had two principal totems--the elk and crane--while some of them had the bear. The French writers call the Atchatchakangouen (Crane) the leading division. At a great conference on the Maumee in Ohio in 1793 the Miami signed with the turtle totem. None of these totems occurs in Morgan's list.

It is impossible to give a satisfactory estimate of the numbers of the Miami at any one time, on account of confusion with the Wea and Piankashaw, who probably never exceeded 1,500. An estimate in 1764 gives them 1,750; another in the following year places their number at 1,250. In 1825 the population of the Miami, Eel Rivers, and Wea was given as 1,400, of whom 327 were Wea. Since their removal to the W. they have rapidly decreased. Only 57 Miami were officially known in Indian Ter. in 1885, while the Wea and Piankashaw were confederated with the remnant of the Illinois under the name of Peoria, the whole body numbering but 149; these increased

to 191 in 1903. The total number of Miami in 1905 in Indian Ter. was 124; in Indiana, in 1900, there were 243; the latter, however, are greatly mixed with white blood. Including individuals scattered among other tribes, the whole number is probably 400.

The Miami joined in or made treaties with the United States as follows: (1) Greenville, O., with Gen. Anthony Wayne, Aug. 3, 1795, defining the boundary between the United States and tribes W. of Ohio r. and ceding certain tracts of land; (2) Ft. Wayne, Ind., June 7, 1803, with various tribes, defining boundaries and ceding certain lands; (3) Grouseland, Ind., Aug., 21, 1805, ceding certain lands in Indiana and defining boundaries; (4) Ft. Wayne, Ind., Sept. 30, 1809, in which the Miami, Eel River tribes, and Delawares ceded certain lands in Indiana, and the relations between the Delawares and Miami regarding certain territory are defined; (5) Treaty of peace at Greenville, O., July 22, 1814, between the United States, the Wyandot, Delawares, Shawnee, Seneca, and the Miami, including the Eel River and Wea tribes; (6) Peace treaty of Spring Wells, Mich., Sept. 8, 1815, by the Miami and other tribes; (7) St. Mary's, O., Oct. 6, 1818, by which the Miami ceded certain lands in Indiana; (8) Treaty of the Wabash, Ind., Oct., 23, 1826, by which the Miami ceded all their lands in Indiana, N. and W. of Wabash and Miami rs.; (9) Wyandot village, Ind., Feb. 11, 1828, by which the Eel River Miami ceded all claim to the reservation at their village on Sugar Tree cr., Ind.; (10) Forks of Wabash, Ind., Oct. 23, 1834, by which the Miami ceded several tracts in Indiana; (11) Forks of the Wabash, Ind., Nov. 6, 1838, by which the Miami ceded most of their re-

maining lands in Indiana, and the United States agreed to furnish them a reservation W. of the Mississippi; (12) Forks of the Wabash, Ind., Nov. 28, 1840, by which the Miami ceded their remaining lands in Indiana and agreed to remove to the country assigned them W. of the Mississippi; (13) Washington, June 5, 1854, by which they ceded a tract assigned by amended treaty of Nov. 28, 1840, excepting 70,000 a. retained as a reserve; (14) Washington, Feb. 23, 1867, with Seneca and others, in which it is stipulated that the Miami may become confederated with the Peoria and others if they so desire.

Among the Miami villages were Chicago, Chippekawkay, Choppatee's village, Kekionga, Kenapacomaqua, Kokomo, Kowasikka, Little Turtle's village, Meshingomesia, Missinquimeschan (Piankashaw), Mississinewa, Osaga, Pahedketcha, Piankashaw (Piankashaw), Pickawillanee, Raccoon's village, Seek's village, St. Francis Xavier (mission, with others), Thorntown (Eel River Miami).

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